

2002, Congress directed NIJ to assess the use of less-than-lethal weapons aboard commercial aircraft as a means of incapacitating individuals posing a clear and present danger. NIJ considered each of the six general categories of less-than-lethal weapons in use or development:

- Electric shock.
- Chemical.
- Impact projectile.
- Physical restraint.
- Light.
- Acoustic.

Many characteristics of an airliner in flight—confined space, air that is recirculated, critical electrical navigation and communication equipment, close proximity of passengers—pose special challenges for each type of weapon.

NIJ's report concluded that electric shock systems, such as tasers or stun guns, show the most promise for use within the confines of an aircraft, but that substantial testing needs to be done to ensure that use of an electrical shock device will not damage or disable critical

flight systems. The report cautioned that all of the weapon types pose safety or effectiveness issues that must be thoroughly examined before any deployment is considered.

As Congress considered whether to allow properly trained pilots to have access to firearms as a last line of defense, NIJ, at the request of the Federal Aviation Administration, began developing performance standards for frangible ammunition. Because frangible ammunition by nature more readily breaks into smaller pieces on impact, it would be more suitable for use in an aircraft than other ammunition types.

For more information:

- NIJ Director Sarah V. Hart's statement to the House Subcommittee on Aviation, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, summarizes the report on less-than-lethal weapons (see <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/speeches/aviation.htm>).
- NIJ's Standards and Testing Program is described at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/sciencetech/st.htm>.

Violence Against Women/ Family Violence

Since passage of Title IV of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, NIJ has aggressively sought to identify and fill gaps in knowledge related to violence against women and family violence. Research findings can help bolster the ability of the criminal justice system to protect victims of domestic violence.

When domestic violence and child maltreatment co-occur (Greenbook initiative)

Too often, domestic violence and child maltreatment occur under the same roof. Yet communities continue to treat violence against women and child maltreatment within the same family as separate

problems, addressed by separate systems. As a result, the community response may not be as effective as it could be. To address this, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges released a report, entitled *Effective Interventions in Domestic Violence and Child Maltreatment: Guidelines for Policy and Practice*, nicknamed the Greenbook.

The Greenbook provides a series of recommendations on how to address domestic violence and child maltreatment simultaneously. The goal is to give courts, child welfare agencies, and domestic violence service organizations more effective methods of responding to battered women and their maltreated children.

An NIJ-backed effort applied Greenbook recommendations at six sites. A national evaluation was begun in 2002 to measure whether the demonstration sites' collaborative efforts result in system change. Four main areas were targeted: identification of co-occurrence of domestic violence and child maltreatment, collaborative planning and implementation, service system change in policies and procedures, and service system integration.

For more information:

- A description of the Greenbook demonstration project is on NIJ's Violence Against Women and Family Violence program Web page, http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/vawprog/demo_green.html.

Responding to campus sexual assault

National studies show that college women face a high risk of sexual

victimization. Previous NIJ-sponsored research estimated that for every 1,000 women attending a college or university, 35 rapes occur each academic year. (See "For more information" on page 8.)

Groundbreaking NIJ-sponsored research completed in 2002 provided the first comprehensive, national-level investigation of how the Nation's colleges and universities respond to student allegations of rape and sexual assault. The study showed that schools have made progress developing explicit sexual assault prevention and response policies, including making them accessible to students. But only a quarter of all schools routinely use procedures for investigating reports or collecting evidence once a report is made, and only a third use due process procedures for the accused.

The study raised many important questions for college administrators about how sexual assault is handled on their campuses. Although the study's findings revealed some shortcomings in various campus sexual assault policies throughout the Nation, it also provided several practical recommendations to use in developing model sexual assault policies and prevention programs, such as:

- Make victims' needs a first priority in the process.
- Develop a model sexual assault policy manual.
- Develop a model sexual assault education pamphlet for students.
- Develop model services for victims.

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This study met the needs of college administrators, campus prevention programmers, and campus law enforcement agencies by providing examples of promising sexual assault programs and emerging policies and practices that are already working to make campuses safer. The final report will be released in 2003.

For more information:

- Bonnie S. Fisher, Francis T. Cullen, and Michael G. Turner, *The Sexual Victimization of College Women*, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, December 2000 (NCJ 182369), <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/pubs-sum/182369.htm>.

Transferring child protective investigations to law enforcement

Florida was the first State in the country to pass legislation to allow the entire responsibility for child protective investigations to be transferred from the child welfare system to the criminal justice system. NIJ research measured the outcomes when responsibility for investigations was transferred to the Sheriffs' Office. The research compared counties where the task was handled by child welfare agencies with counties where it was handled by the sheriff. The aim was to see if children are safer and whether there are impacts on other parts of the child welfare system. Findings suggest there is no evidence that the transfer of responsibility for child protection to law enforcement has an effect on children or families, an important finding if such transfers

become a trend because many were concerned that law enforcement would not be as sensitive in handling such cases, resulting in unintended harm. In fact, police officers developed greater sensitivity toward child welfare cases after the transfer of responsibility, focusing on how to help the families involved.

Research on the commercial sexual exploitation of children

Although the precise number of victims cannot be determined, NIJ research in 2002 estimated that more than 200,000 American children and youth are at risk of commercial sexual exploitation each year. Researchers combined interviews with 1,000 key informants with surveys of nearly 300 agencies that serve child victims and their families to identify the nature and extent of child sexual exploitation. Among the factors fueling child sexual exploitation are prostitution by runaways, prior history of child sexual abuse or assault, poverty, membership in gangs, organized crime recruitment of children for prostitution, and illegal trafficking of children for sexual purposes to the United States from developing countries.

The report offered a series of recommendations to strengthen the Nation's capacity for protecting vulnerable youth from commercial sexual exploitation: emphasize prevention, target the exploiters, enact tougher penalties and wield existing laws more forcefully, and promote public-private partnerships and multijurisdictional task forces to combat exploitation.